

THE MISTAKE I NEARLY MADE

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[Assignment: Write an essay in which you compare and/or contrast an early view you had of something (holidays, persons, major life events, etc.) with your present view. How may your present view change someday? Remember to keep control of your subject with good transitions and ordering. Use narrative, description, and process techniques when applicable.]

Music has always been an important part of my life. I have particularly enjoyed singing and have been involved in various choirs from the time I was in high school to the present. Every aspect of my life has been touched by this involvement. However, were it not for the actions of my mother during the summer before my freshman year in high school, my life would be very different.

This life-changing event seemed unimportant at the time. It was time to enroll for classes for my freshmen year. My guidance counselor handed out enrollment sheets and a course catalog to everyone in my grade. Excitement overwhelmed us as we looked through the catalog and discussed the classes we were thinking about taking. For the first year in my high school, many classes were required and there was not much room for choice. I signed up for the typical classes: English, algebra, geography, physical science, and physical education. I had to find two more classes to reach the seven classes that we were required to take. One of these electives was an easy choice for me. I enrolled in band because I had been playing the trumpet for three years and I enjoyed it. Making the last choice was the one that caused me headaches, and later, so much joy.

I brought my enrollment sheet home and showed it to my parents. They approved of all the classes I was planning on taking, and they were glad that I had decided to stay in band. My mom then told me that I should enroll in Robed Choir (the vocal group available for freshmen). "No way," I said. I absolutely did not want to do this; I had better things planned. I had considered taking a study hall or weight training or perhaps general business, but there was no way I was going to sing in a choir. That would just not be a very cool thing to do.

When in high school, keeping a cool image is very important (or so it seemed at the time). I was already going to be starting out high school as a "band geek," and I had no desire to add "choir nerd" to my list. I had other goals in mind. I was very involved in sports, and everybody knows that football players don't sing in choir. Besides the image problem it would create, I didn't want to take choir because I hated to sing for other people. I saw absolutely no reason why I should take Robed Choir. Fortunately, my mom saw otherwise.

I received the message from my mother during dinner one night. "Nathan, you are going to sign up for Robed Choir." I protested bitterly and used every excuse I could think of: "None of my friends are doing it . . . I need a study hall so I can get good grades . . . I already signed up for one music class . . . I should take weight training to help me in football." Nothing worked.

Finally, after realizing that my mother's mind was not going to change, that my father felt the same way as she did, and that I needed one of their signatures to enroll, I gave in.

Before turning the enrollment sheet in I seriously considered erasing "Robed Choir" from the list and adding a different class to it. Fortunately for me, my conscience forbade me from doing so.

I dreaded the first time I would have to go to choir. I wondered to myself, "What if I had to sing by myself? What if only geeks and ugly girls are in it?" These important questions and many more were answered when I stepped into the vocal room for the first time.

When I first entered the brightly lit, semi-circular room, I knew that choir was not going to be so bad. There in front of me sat many people I knew including some of my good friends. Mr. Lang, the director, asked us if we knew what voice part we sang. Because I didn't, I had to go with him to his office and sing for him. This was not nearly as bad as I had envisioned it would be.

After he told me I had "a good tenor voice," we returned to the vocal room. Mr. Lang then handed out a simple song to the choir and we sang it. I knew then that my mom was right; I was going to have fun in choir.

I continued to sing throughout high school. During my sophomore year I tried out for the select choir and made it. I was in Tiger Chorale until graduation. Many of my friends were also in this group and we had a lot of fun. Today, vocal music continues to bring me much joy and satisfaction as I am in the Kantorei here at V.U. It is hard to imagine my life without singing.

I am very thankful that my mom forced me to sing six years ago. Her tough stance has caused my entire life to be different. If I had had my way and taken weight training instead of choir, I would be a little stronger now, and perhaps I could have been better in football. But these advantages do not compare with those that I have received from singing. During the summer before high school, my mom saved me from making a costly mistake that would have robbed me of many great memories and a lot of happiness.